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Dear Mr. Mintz-

I have read your letter, and will give it even more careful study again; meanwhile a brief acknowledgment. I can't help but feel that your vehemence is directed primarily at the FDA and the committee (and perhaps my exuberance in calling it 'distinguished'-- though I think that could be defended). You have not seen my second piece where I go into a more detailed discussion of some of the statistics. But my main point is, I am afraid, just the converse of yours: It is logically impossible to prove that any drug is safe; the most one can hope for is to assess the confidence-limits of the possible risk, ^(the limits cannot be zero) and then ask whether the intended advantages outweigh this risk. The committee was put on a fool's errand if it was supposed to obtain absolute standards of security. Plainly, there will be gross differences in outlook depending on one's views about pregnancy, or ~~the~~ rather the pregnancies that the Pill might forfend, and the style in which this is done/. This outlook is then bound to be colored by personal attitudes about such questions as the availability of contraception to unmarried coeds, and so on. However, it may be more useful to discuss this further after the articles are concluded/.

~~One~~ One point though-- I certainly did not intend 'glib' to characterize any single outlook, rather the idea that it was even possible to characterize the report by a headline in a few words. 'Green light' or 'red light' would be equally 'glib'. I thought what I said would be agreeable to you, about the meaninglessness of the advice to physicians.

I am strongly stressing the general poverty of meaningful data. I was shocked to hear your attribution that prospective studies had been discouraged on account of cost.

Many of your criticisms concern the things I didn't say; I'm afraid the paper won't give me enough room to put down all my thoughts, or I'm not skillful enough to exploit the space I have. You might be surprised on how many of these details we do agree, even if not on general outlook.

COPY
Smiley

John Smiley